

In the claims

17. A Gram positive bacterial strain according to claim 23 wherein the strain has a genome that is equal to or less than 3.2 Mb in size, with the proviso that the bacterial strain is not a *Lactobacillus helveticus* strain having a gusA reporter gene inserted into a gene encoding the HrtA protease, and wherein the bacterial strain comprises an expression cassette having a sequence encoding a protein of interest operably linked to a promoter.

19. A method of producing a fermented product, comprising:
culturing a bacterial strain according to claim 23 with a fermentation substrate under conditions suitable to produce a fermented product.

20. A method of producing a dietetic food, comprising:
culturing a bacterial strain according to claim 23 with a substrate under conditions suitable to produce a dietetic food.

21. A method of producing a medicinal product, comprising:
culturing a bacterial strain according to claim 23 HtrA with a suitable substrate under conditions effective to produce a medicinal product.

23. A Gram positive bacterial strain that does not express a functional HtrA protease.